



Bliss Rapids snail

Taylorconcha serpenticola

STATUS

Threatened (57 FR 59257, December 14, 1992)

DESCRIPTION

The Bliss Rapids snail has a thick one-inch shell. The shell ranges from pale tan, which is almost colorless, to an amber color. The pale form of this snail is slightly smaller. Most of these mollusks are found on stable rocks in the free-flowing waters of the Snake River, as well as in several cold-water springs in the Hagerman Valley. During the daytime, the snail resides on the sides and undersides of the rocks. It migrates to graze on small algae and diatoms on the tops of rocks at night.

HISTORY

This species is one of the few that survived prehistoric Lake Idaho, which existed in southwestern Idaho about 3.5 million years ago. The Bliss Rapids snail was first collected live in 1959. It was formally described in 1994 by Hershler.

DISTRIBUTION

The Bliss Rapids snail lives only in the gravel and boulders of swift currents, usually just below canyon segments of the river, in rapids or on boulder bars just below rapids. It is found in a few isolated colonies mainly in the Hagerman Valley. Its fragmented population is confined to the area between Salmon Falls Dam and King Hill.

WHAT HAS THREATENED THIS SPECIES?

The free-flowing, cold water environments required by this species have been altered by reservoir development, river diversions and habitat modification. Also, water quality has deteriorated due to altered natural flow and pollution.

WHAT IS BEING DONE TO HELP RECOVER THIS SPECIES?

If the Snake River is further modified and greater water diversions are created, the entire population of this snail may be in grave danger. Water quality and habitat conditions in the mainstem Snake River must be improved to begin to recover the Bliss Rapids snail. Natural reproduction may begin to recur if conservation measures are implemented such as protection of remaining free-flowing habitats from hydro development, prevention of further Snake River diversions, improved water quality and natural flow conditions.

REFERENCES

USFWS. 1995. Snake River Aquatic Species Recovery Plan.

